

1) Bluejacket Salvage and Reforestation Project [Palouse Ranger District]

Proposed Categories: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(13), *Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction. The proposed action may include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing; and*

36 CFR 220.6(e)(5), *Regeneration of an area to native tree species, including site preparation that does not involve the use of herbicides or result in vegetation type conversion.*

Legal Coordinates (Boise Meridian): Township 42 North, Range 2 West, Sections 20 and 21.

Background: The 2017 Strychnine Fire burned approximately 1000 acres, almost entirely (920 acres) on Potlatch Corporation lands. The remaining 80 acres on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests' Palouse Ranger District were severely burned in the fire, including economically valuable species such as Western Red Cedar, Douglas-fir, and Grand Fir. Over time, fire-killed trees lose their economic value due to deterioration of the wood from fungi, insect damage and decay. As a result, by the fall of 2018 up to 20% of the economic value of the trees could be lost.

The purpose and need of the Bluejacket Salvage and Reforestation project (Project) is to harvest dead and/or dying trees in the Strychnine Fire area on National Forest System lands in the Palouse Ranger District. The Project's primary objective is to optimize the economic value of the timber to support the local forest products industry and the local economy. Other objectives include protecting the public from hazardous fire-killed snags, and revegetating the burned areas with appropriate tree species.

Project Design / Equipment: Timber harvest would occur on approximately 80 acres located on the Palouse Ranger District. The timber harvest would be accomplished through a commercial salvage sale, with fire-killed or injured/dying trees for harvest being designated by Forest Service personnel. Desirable trees that survived the fire would be retained. Due to the topography of the project area, timber harvest would be conducted primarily by using skyline logging systems with ground-based (tractor) systems used on slopes less than 35%.

Access to the cutting units would be by Forest Service Road 4774-B and 4774. Up to 0.5 miles of temporary road would be built to provide access to the units. All temporary roads would be removed and rehabilitated upon project completion.

After the timber sale was completed, the burned areas would be planted with a mix of appropriate native seral tree species including Western white pine, ponderosa pine, and Western larch. Site preparation, such as prescribed burning of slash, may be implemented prior to tree planting. Pocket gopher baiting would be conducted post-tree planting to increase reforestation success.

BMPs for Water Quality and Weed Management would be implemented during the project. The project area does not include any watercourses or Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas. The following [Design Criteria are not all-inclusive, as Forest Plan standards are incorporated by reference:

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Soil Resources, Water Quality And Fish Habitat

1. Restrict activities when soils are wet to prevent resource damage (indicators include excessive rutting, soil displacement, and erosion).
2. Limit ground based skidding to slopes 35% or less.
3. Locate and design skid trails, landings and yarding corridors prior to harvest activities to minimize the area of detrimental soil effects. Space tractor skid trails to a minimum of 80 feet apart, except where converging, and reuse existing skid trails where practicable. This does not preclude the use of feller bunchers.
4. Ensure suspension of one end of the log when utilizing skyline yarding systems.
5. Construct drainage controls and apply available slash in cable and skyline corridors upon completion of harvest activities where bare mineral soil is exposed.
6. Scarify and recontour excavated skid trails to restore slope hydrology and soil productivity.
7. Scarify non-excavated skid trails and landings that are compacted or entrenched 3 inches or more. Scarify to a depth of 6 to 14 inches.
8. All temporary roads will be scarified and recontoured (decommissioned). Reshape cut/fill slopes and crossings to natural contours. Apply available slash to the recontour surface (slash is considered available where the equipment is able to reach it from the working area where the decommissioning is occurring).
9. Allow winter logging only during frozen conditions, where required per SR-11. Frozen conditions are defined as 4 inches of frozen ground or a barrier of unpacked snow greater than two feet in depth and packed snow one foot in depth.
10. Retain an average of 7-15 tons per acre of coarse woody debris (greater than 3 inches in diameter) following completion of activities.

Wildlife

1. Maintain a minimum 40-acre yearlong no treatment buffer (no ground disturbing activities) around occupied northern goshawk nest trees.
2. No ground disturbing activities shall be allowed inside known occupied northern goshawk post-fledgling areas from 15 April to 15 August.
3. Maintain snags in accordance with Forest Plan standards including snag density and the scale at which those densities apply, preferably retaining larger diameter snags.

Cultural Resources

1. Halt ground-disturbing activities if cultural resources are discovered until an approved Archaeologist can properly evaluate and document the resources in compliance with 36 CFR 800.

Air Quality

1. Coordinate with the North Idaho/Montana Airshed Group when prescribed fires are scheduled to ensure compliance with the Clear Air Act.

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Noxious Weeds

1. Use Forest Service approved native plant species or non-native annual species to meet erosion control needs and other management objectives. Follow regional plant and seed transfer guidelines. Require contractors to use certified seed laboratories to test seed against the all state noxious weed list, and provide documentation of the seed inspection test to the contract administrator. Apply only certified weed-free seed and mulch.
2. Certify that rock used for surfacing is free of noxious weed seed.
3. Remove all mud, soil, and plant parts from off road equipment before moving into project area to limit the spread of noxious weeds. Conduct cleaning off National Forest lands.

Access Management and Public Safety

1. Close existing gates (consistent with current motor vehicle restrictions) daily during non-operating hours.

Pesticide Use

1. Favor pesticides with half-lives of three months or less when practicable to achieve treatment objectives.
2. Apply at lowest effective rates as large droplets or pellets.
3. Follow the label directions.
4. Favor selective treatment.
5. Apply chemicals using methods that minimize risk of entry to surface and ground water.
6. Bait will not be stored within 200 feet of any water source.

Project Implementation: Timber harvest is expected to occur in the spring and summer of 2018, with reforestation expected in the spring of 2020. Prescribed burning for site preparation would occur prior to reforestation activities. Pocket gopher baiting would occur in 2021 or 2022.

Project Information: Miles Spong, Supervisory Forester, Palouse Ranger District, 208-875-1711

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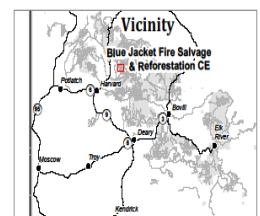
Map of Bluejacket Salvage and Reforestation Project

**Bluejacket Salvage and
Reforestation Project**

Nez Perce - Clearwater
National Forest
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Legend

- Road
- Stream/River
- Intermittent Stream
- ▬ Strychnine Fire - FS ownership
- NON-FS Ownership
- USDA Forest Service Ownership



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